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TAGS: [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [OPRC](#) [PTER](#) [CI](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION - U.S. AND LATIN AMERICA

On May 25, conservative, influential newspaper-of-record "El Mercurio" (circ. 116,807) carried a column by international commentator Karin Ebensperger entitled, "The United States, Far From South America."

"In an unprecedented event, retired U.S. generals have raised their voices criticizing Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's management of the war (in Iraq).... That fact alone shows the erosion the U.S. has suffered in Iraq and explains, in part, why it has put South America aside. This does not mean Washington should have a paternalistic or military presence again in the region.... But the U.S is not seizing many opportunities in the region to help free trade benefit the poor.... But in Washington's defense we can say that it is not easy to build a policy in a region as divided as South America, where populism, tension among countries, and insults among its presidents abound."

KELLY